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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION IRAQ IRAN US IMMIGRATION
POLICY MOUSSAOUI AND THE WAR ON TERROR ARGENTINE ANTI-
MONEY LAUNDERING LEGISLATION US TREASURY DEPARTMENT ON
ARGENTINE DEBT EVO MORALES US DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND
USDA COMMENTS ON ARGENTINA SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS
ISRAELI ELECTIONS WORLD ENVIRONMENT 04/03/06

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend papers cover US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice acknowledging US "mistakes" in Iraq; the implications of the war in Iraq and the threat posed by Iran; US immigration policies and their impact on upcoming US legislative elections; the trial of Zacarias Moussaoui; FATF praise for Argentina's progress on anti-money laundering legislation; the opinion of an anonymous US Treasury official that Argentina should negotiate its defaulted debt; the upcoming Bolivian referendum over greater regional autonomy; the US State Department and Department of Energy's critical comments on Argentine trade and energy policies; the USDA criticizing Argentina's suspension of meat exports; and the visit of Catholic priest Roy Bourgeois to Latin America. Leading "Clarín" carries two editorials, one on the outcome of Israeli elections, the other on global environmental damage.

2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Rice acknowledges mistakes in Iraq"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (04/01) "US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice acknowledged

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yesterday that the US made 'thousands' of tactical errors in Iraq since the beginning of the invasion in 2003, although she insisted on defending the USG decision to overthrow dictator Saddam Hussein.

"During a visit to the UK, where she was the target of massive protest demonstrations, the USG official attempted to calm Europe's concerns about the 'war on terrorism' launched by the Bush administration, and she added that the US 'does not want to be the warden of the world.'

"Nonetheless, Rice sustained that the removal of former Iraqi president Hussein was 'a positive strategic decision,' because 'it would have been impossible to build a different Middle East with Saddam Hussein in the middle.'"

- "US - from the mistakes in Iraq to the threat posed

by Iran"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst of leading "Clarín," comments (04/01) "... Republican legislator Henry Hyde, who presides over the US House Committee on International Relations, said 'Becoming indifferent to easily recognizable signs, we run the risk of ignoring the long-term costs of our actions and retreats, which should lead us to re-assessing our goals and means.'

"His reference to the Iraqi chaos generated by the 2003 invasion is clear...

"Many members of the G.O.P. are telling Bush that it is increasingly clear that (the invasion of) Iraq was a mistake and that the time is approaching when it will be unavoidable to acknowledge this.

Regarding Iran, most experts agree that Iran does not have the feared bomb, nor is it on the verge of having it and, in any event, there are those who believe that if Tehran enters the exclusive Nuclear Club, it would not be a factor that could significantly alter the current power balance in the region.

"The bottom line is that Bush ordered Iran to abandon its nuclear program from his rigid 'You are with me or you are against me'-view. From this point of view, there is not much margin either for negotiation or for Iran to dismiss Washington's wishes. This is why, as happened in 2003 in Iraq, the diplomatic scene (UN, etc.) threatens to become irrelevant once again."

- "Immigration, a challenge for Bush"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for

daily-of-record "La Nación," comments (04/02)

"Accustomed as they are to passing unnoticed, and, even more, to making an effort not to call attention to themselves, illegal immigrants have broken their own rules. One million people - most of them Hispanics - demonstrated in Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, Phoenix and this capital city during the last eight days. This time, they wanted to be heard.

"... How to respond to the wave of immigration has become one of the most sensitive topics in the remaining time before November legislative elections, as well as the status of the economy, the fight against terrorism and the future of Iraq. According to a Pew Hispanic Center opinion survey, 52% of Americans believe illegal immigrants represent a 'burden' because they ultimately obtain work positions and houses... 44% believe they 'strengthen' the country.

"President George W. Bush agrees with the second view and he got involved in the Congressional debate. With declining popularity ratings, and elections getting closer, the road to be taken by legislators could well turn him into a 'lame duck' or, on the contrary, he could still preserve the power he won in 2004. Bush supports the idea of granting temporary legal worker status to illegal immigrants, with the possibility of becoming permanent residents and, after that, citizens, although without priority over legal residents already in the process of becoming citizens."

- "Moussaoui: lying for jihad"

Gwynne Dyer, contributor for liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald," writes (04/03) "'You are

allowed to lie for jihad. You're allowed any technique to defeat your enemy,' Zacarias Moussaoui told the Virginia courtroom on March 27, trying to explain why he had changed his story about not being directly involved in the September 11 plot.

"... Moussaoui's testimony is worthless - and yet his trial does tell us some important things about September 11. It reminds us of the spectacular incompetence of the FBI... It also reminds us that the White House was not paying attention to intelligence about terrorist threats anyway, so focused was it on building a case for invading Iraq...

"Above all, it reminds us of what sad sacks the terrorists were. Over the past four and a half years, the Bush administration has constructed its entire foreign policy on a 'war against terror' which presupposes a serious opponent on the other side...

"... This is not a global crisis, however much President Bush strives to define it as such. From the start, the 'war on terror' has served as a cover for various plans for asserting US military and political hegemony around the world that were already on the agenda of the neoconservatives for years before they took control of US foreign and defense policy with the inauguration of Mr. Bush in January, 2001. It has been one of the longest and most successful hoaxes in history - but the strategies that hide behind it are still doomed to end in failure."

- "FATF praises Argentina"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (04/01) "Argentina passed the test - Kander Asmal, head of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)... showed he is happy with the progress made by our country in adapting its legislation to the FATF's recommendations to fight money laundering.

"... The head of the Argentine House Committee on Foreign Relations, Jorge Arguello, said that 'Argentina has passed the FATF's June review'... The FATF had asked Argentina to approve legislation facilitating the judicial investigation of money laundering crimes. For this purpose and aware of the

arrival of the FATF delegation, the Argentine Lower House accelerated the enactment of a law to lift banking, stock exchange and professional secrecy. However, legislators acknowledged that financial terrorism is still a problem which has been solved in most countries of the world."

- "Argentine Government is asked to negotiate its defaulted debt"

Martin Kanenguier, on special assignment in Belo Horizonte for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (04/02) "The US Treasury Department believes Argentina should resume negotiations with its holdout creditors...

"A high-ranking Treasury official said yesterday that the Bush administration still considers this issue very important.

"... 'We are not siding with creditors or with the Government, but something should be done - negotiations should continue.'"

- "Domestic problems ahead for Morales"

Mark Scott, contributor for liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald," writes (04/01) "Since taking office in January, Bolivia's president Evo Morales has made worldwide headlines with his controversial leadership style and anti-globalization rhetoric.

"... A referendum over greater regional autonomy will be held in conjunction with the election of delegates for the constitutional assembly in July.

"Indeed, he has spent more time bolstering alliances with left-wing politicians throughout Latin America, as well as reassuring the US of his 'coca si, cocaine no' drug policy, than he has addressing the growing regional autonomy movement.

"If Morales does not confront it soon, however, he may learn first-hand, as did the presidents preceding him, that the greatest challenge to democracy in Bolivia comes from within the country's borders."

- "The US strongly criticizes the Argentine trade and energy policies"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," comments (04/01) "Members of the USG criticized several points of the Argentine economic policy by warning that it could bring 'serious' consequences for local growth, inflation control and new investment.

"These remarks were made by members of the USTR, and the US Secretary of Energy, who agree with the remarks made by the US Department of Agriculture about the suspension on meat exports.

"Karen Harbert, Under Secretary for International Issues at the US Department of Energy, focused on price controls in Argentina's energy production system, and she placed the country among those facing 'serious challenges' in this area in Latin America, along with Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador."

"Also, the US State Department does not like the (Argentine) Government's decision to freeze prices and suspend meat exports."

- "The USDA criticizes the Argentine ban on exports"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (04/01) "The US Department of Agriculture criticized the suspension of meat exports ordered by the Argentine government. It predicted that its impact will be highly negative if it goes beyond the 180 days expected, and it assessed that the measure could affect the image of the country abroad."

- "They want to close the School of the Americas"

Nestor Restivo, columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (04/03) "... Catholic priest Roy Bourgeois, one of the founders of SOA Watch, came to Latin America, came to Latin America... so that the claim of US citizens who 'pay 20 million dollars per year in taxes to support this school of murderers' adds itself to the region's commitment 'not to send more military or police officers to the school.'

"The US renamed the School as Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, but 'it is the same as in the past - the only difference is that

instead of talking about anti-subversion, they talk about global terrorism and drug trafficking. In fact, it trains those who defend economic interests in the region with their crimes."

13. EDITORIALS

- "Israel voted for peace"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" (04/03) reads "The outcome of Israeli elections indicated that current PM Ehud Olmert is Ariel Sharon's successor.

"This continuity suggests a change in the Israeli political map with the emergence of a new centrist political force whose unifying factor is the promise to solve the conflict with the Palestinians.

"It is the first time that such a proposal is supported by the majority of the Israeli electorate...

"... Formulas for consensus will be required to attend to the chief demands of the people, among them, a resolute peace process under such difficult circumstances as a Palestinian government in the hands of Hamas, which has not renounced violence or war."

- "Gloomy environmental future"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (04/01) "... The environmental situation is so sensitive that, as per the UN Convention for Biodiversity's request, a group of experts have pointed out that even if an immediate stop of all carbon dioxide emissions were implemented, there would be a lingering inertial impact for decades and temperatures would continue increasing.

"If this gloomy prediction comes true, it could bring the extinction of many species and would force the implementation of adapting strategies. Entire populations, like that of Tuvalu, would have to be evacuated while catastrophes like that of New Orleans (which would not have happened had its marshes not been destroyed) would repeat themselves in many parts of the world.

"In spite of this knowledge, the attitude of some of the main powers prevents basic deals aimed at alleviating the environmental damage."

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GUTIERREZ